Arthur T. Froggato, in The Spectator. As those who, on some lonely mountain-height, Watching through all the weary hours of night, Await the pale rose of the morning light, I wait for thee.

As one who, waking on a bed of pain.

And helpless in his agony, is fain.

To wait the sweet return of sleep again,

I wait for thee.

As deaf men crave for song, and blind for sight, As weary sons of tell long for the night. And as the fettered spirit longs for flight, I long for thee.

PIETRO GHISLERI.

RY F. MARION CRAWFORD.
of "Ramitneson." "The Three Fates," etc. of "Saroffnesca." The Three Fates Copyright, 1892, by Macmillan & Co CHAPTER L.

The relation of two stepsisters is unusual When the Honorable Mrs. Carlyon came to Rome twenty years ago, a young widow and the mother of a little girl named Laura, she did not forcese the complications which her second marriage was to produce. She was a good woman in her way. and if she had guessed what it would mean to be the stepmother of Adele Braccio she might have hesitated before marrying Camillo of that name, commonly known as the Prince of Gerano. For the Prince had also been married before, and his first wife had left him this one child, Adele, who was only a year and a half older than little Laura Carlyon. No children were born to the Gerano couple, and the two girls were brought up together as though they were sisters. The Prince and Princess were deeply affached to each other and to them both, so that for many years Caes Gerano was justly looked upon as a model

Mrs. Carlyon was very poor when she came to Her husband had been a careless, goodhumored, and rather reckless younger son, and when he broke his neck in coming down the Gross Glockner he left his widow about as much as men of his stamp generally leave to their families, to wit, a fearful and wonderful confusion of unpaid debts and a considerable number of promises to pay money signed by persons whose promises were not of much consequence, even when clearly set down on paper. It seems to be a peculiarity of poor and good-natured men that they will lend whatever money they have to impecunious friends in distress rather than use it for the paying of the just debts they owe their tailors.

Gerano was rich. It does not by any means follow that Mrs. Carlyon married him for his money, though she could not have married him without it. She fell in love with him. He, on his part, having made a marriage of interest when he took his first wife, and having led by no means a very peaceful existence with the necessed Princess, considered that he had earned the right himself, and accordingly did so. Moreover, Mrs. Carlyon was a Catholic, which singularly facilitated matters in the eyes of Gerano's numerous relations. Jack Carlyon had been of the Church of England; and though anything but a practising believer, if he believed in anything at all, he had nevertheless absolutely insisted that his daughter should be brought up in his own ereed. On this one point he had displayed all the tenacity he possessed, and the supply then seemed to be exhausted so far as other matters were concerned. His wife was a very conscientious woman, altogether superior to him in character, and she continued to respect his wishes, even after his death. Laura, she said, should choose for herself when she was old enough. In the mean time she should go to the English Church. The consequence was that the little girl had an English nurse and afterward an English governess, while Adele was taken care of and taught by Catholics. Under these circumstances, and as the stepsisters were not related by blood nor even by race, it is not strange that they should have grown up to be as different as possible, while living under the same roof and calling the same persons father and mother.

The question of religion alone could certainly not have brought about the events here to be chronicled, and it may be as well to say at once that this history is not in the least concerned with matters of faith, creed, or dogma, which are better left to those good men whose business it is to understand them. The main and striking points of contrast were these. Adele was barely more than pretty. Laura was all but had nothing or next to nothing to expect at her mother's death. Adele was quick-witted, lively, given to exaggeration in her talk, and not very scrupulous as to questions of fact. Laura was low to decide, but tenacious of her decisions, and,

on the whole, very truthful.

In appearance, so far as generalities were concerned, the contrast between the two girls was marked. Both were of the dark type, but Laura's complexion was paler than Adele's and her hair was blacker, as well as thicker and more glossy. Laura's eyes were large, very deep set and dark. There was something strange in their look, something quite unusual, and which might almost be called boly, if that were not too strong s word to use in connection with a woman of the world. Spicca, the melancholy duellist, who was still alive at that time, used to say that no one could possibly be as good as Laura Carlyon looked; a remark which showed that he was acquainted with the sayings of a great English wit, and was not above making use of them Probably some part of the effect produced by Laura's eyes was due to the evenly perfect whiteness of her skin and the straight which divided them from the broad, low torchead, For her hair grew low, and she wore it in a simple on without the abundance of little curls, which even then were considered almost essential to woman's beauty. Her pallor, too, was quite natural, for she had a good constitution and had rarely even had a headache. In figure she was well proportioned, of average height and rather strongly made, with large, lirm, well-shaped hands. On the whole, a graceful girl, but not in that way remarkable among others of her own age. In her face, and altogether in her presence, the chief attraction lay in the look of her eyes, which made one forget to notice the well-chiselled nosea little short perhaps-the really beautiful mouth and the perfect teeth. The chin, too, was broad and firm-too firm, some might have said, for one so young. Considering all these facts together. most people agreed that Laura was not far from being a great beauty.

Adele was somewhat shorter than her steper, and more inclined to be stout. Her black eyes were set more together, and her eyebrows almost met, while her lustreless hair curled naturally in a profusion of tiny ringlets upon her ad. The small fine nose reminded one of s ferret, and the white teeth looked sharp and pointed when the somewhat thin lips parted and owed them; but she was undoubtedly pretty. and something more than pretty. Her face had color and animation, she carried her small head well, and her gestures were graceful and easy She was iluent, too, in conversation, and ready at ses with a quick answer. Any one could see, in spite of her plump figure, that she was of very nervous constitution, restless, unsettled, and easily moved, capable of considerable deterion when really affected. She never understood Laura, nor did Laura really understand

domestic, it became necessary to choose a husband Adele so soon as she made her first appearance At that time Laura was not yet Gerano had already looked about him made up his mind. He was a little man, gray, thin and nervous, but gifted with an unusually agreeable manner, a pleasant one of voice, a frank glance, and an extremely -s man much liked in the world

determined that if possible his daughter should marry Don Francesco Savelli, a worthy young person, his father's eidest son, heir to a

good estate and a still better name, and altogether a most desirable husband from all points of view. Gerano met with no serious difficulty in bringing about what he wished, and in due time Don Francesco was affianced to Donna Adele and was privileged to visit at the Palazzo Braccio almose as often as he pleased. He thus ear Laura Carlyon often, and he very naturally fell in love with her. He had no particular inclination to marry Donna Adele, but obeyed his father blindly, as a matter of course, just as Adele obeyed Gerano. That is a part of the Roman system. Laura, however, did not fall in love with Fran She was perhaps too young yet, or it is quite possible that Francesco was too dull and un interesting a personage in her eyes. But Adels saw these things, and was very angry when she was quite sure that her future husband would have greatly preferred to marry her stepsister She may be pardoned for having been jealous

for the situation was hardly bearable. Francesco did not, indeed, make love to Laura Even had he been rash enough for that, he was in reality too much a gentleman at heart to have done such a thing. He knew very well that he was to marry Adele, whether he cared for her or not, and he behaved with great propriety and with not a little philosophy. The virtue of resignation had been carefully developed in him from his childhood, and Francesco's parents now reaped their reward; he would not have thought

of opposing them by word or deed. But he could not hide what he felt. Like many good young men, he was sensitive, and if he alternately blushed and turned pale when Laura spoke to him it was not his fault. His father and mother could assuredly not expect him to control the circulation of his blood when it chose to rise above the line of his collar, or seemed to sink to the level of his boots. Adele was, however, at first very angry, and then very jealous, and at last hated her stepsister with all her heart, as young women can hate under circumstances of great provocation.

Meanwhile, Laura remained calmly unconscious of all that was happening Francesco Savelli's outward and worldly advantages did not appeal to her in the least. The fact that he was fair had no interest for her any more than the fact that the old Prince of Gerano was dark. She talked to the young man a little, when the conversation was general, just as she talked to every one else, when she had anything to say, becaushe was not naturally shy. But she never at tempted to manufacture remarks when nothing came to her lips, because she was not yet called upon to do so. Nor was her silence by any means golden, so far as Savelli was concerned. When she was not speaking to him, she took no notice of him. His hair might be as yellow as mustard and his eyes as blue as periwinkles, as his admirers said; she did not care. If possible, Adde hated her even more for caring so little.

In due time Francesco Savelli married Adele Braccio and took her to live under his father's roof. After the great event peace descended one more upon the household for a time and Laura Carlyon saw much less of her adorer. Not, it deed, that there had been any open conflict between the stepsisters, nor even a declaration of war. Laura had attributed Adele's coldness to her excitement about the marriage, natural enough under the circumstances, and had not been hurt by it, while Adele had carefully kept her jealousy to herself; but when the two met afterward. Laura felt that she was immeasurably far removed from anything like intimacy or real friendship with the bride, and she was surprised that Francesco should pay so much attention to The young couple came to the Palazzo Braccio

at regular intervals, and at all these family gatherings Savelli spent his time in making conversation for Laura. He was a very worthy young mon, as has been said, and his talents were not of the highest order, but he did his best, and succeeded at least in making Laura think him passably agreeable. She was willing to hear him talk, and Adele noted the fact. When she drave nome from her father's house with her husband, he was generally abstracted and gave random answers to her questions or observations. end of a year it was clear that he still loved Laura in a hopeless, helpless, sentimental fashion of his own, and Adele hated her more than ever A second year and a third went by, and Laura had been some time in society; still the situation remained unchanged. The world said that the young Savellis were a very happy couple, but it always looked at Laura Carlyon with an odd expression, as though it knew something strange autiful. Adele was a great heiress, and Laura about her; something not quite right, which it ment to be got by watching her. The world is the generic appellation of all those who go down to the sea of society in long gowns or white ties and live and move and have their being therein. Other people do not count, even when they are quite bad, although they may have very big names and a great deal of money. The world, there-fore, wagged its head and said that Laura Carlyon was in love with her brother-in-law, or, to be quite accurate, with her stepbrother-in-law, because she was dark and his hair was so exceedingly yellow. The world also went on to say that Donna Adele behaved very kindly about it, and that it was so good of Francesco Savelli to talk to Laura just as if there were nothing wrong: for, it added, if he were to avoid her, there would certainly be gossip before long. No one who does not live in society need attempt to follow this sequence of ideas. As usual, too, nobody took the least trouble to find out the origin of the story, but everybody was quite sure of having heard it at first hand from the one person who

The Princess of Gerano took her daughter everywhere. She had conscientiously done her luty toward Adele, and was sincerely tond of her besides; but she loved Laura almost as much as the good mother in the story book loves her only child when the latter has done something particularly disgraceful. She was at first annoyed and then made seriously anxious by the young girl's total failure in society, from the social point of view. Laura was beautiful, good and acomplished. Ugly, spiteful, and stupid girls succeeded better than she, though some of them had no better prospect of a dowry. The good lady sought in vain the cause of the trouble, but failed to find it out. Had she been born in Kome, she would doubtless have had many kind friends to help her in the solution of the difficulty. though she bore a Roman name, and had adopted Roman customs and had led a Roman life for nearly twenty years, she was tacitly looked upon as a foreigner, and her daughter was treated in the same way, though she, at least, spoke the language as her own. Moreover, the girl was not a Catholic, and that was an additional disadvantage where matrimony was concerned. It became evident to the Princess that she was not likely to find a husband for her daughter-certainly not such a husband as she had dreamed that Laura might love, and who was to love her

and make her happy It must not be supposed that Gerano himself would have been indifferent if he had known the real facts of the case. But he did not. Like many elderly Romans he hardly ever went into society and took very little interest in its doings He was very much concerned with the adminis tration of his fortune, and for his own daughter's welfare in her new surroundings. He spent a good deal of time at his club, and was often in the country, even in the height of the season. He supposed that no one asked for Laura's hand because she was dowerless, and he was sincerely sorry for it; but it did not enter his mind to provide her with a suitable portion out of his abundance. He was too conscientious for that What he had inherited from his father must go down intact to his child and to her children-a son had already been born to the young Savellisand to divide the property, or to take from it anything like a fortune for Laura, would

Braccio. Laura herself was perhaps less disturbed by the coldness she encountered than her mother was for her sake. She had a certain contempt for

little short of actual robbery in the eyes of a

young girls of her age and younger, whose sold idea was to be married as soon as possible and with the greatest advantage to themselves. She was not very vain and did not expect great admiration on the one hand, nor any particular dislike on the other. Her character, too, was onthat must develop slowly, if it were ever to attain its mature growth. She doubtless had moments of annoyance and even of depression; for few young girls, and certainly no women, are whelly unconscious of neglect in society. although she was naturally inclined to melancholy. as her eyes clearly showed, she was not by nature morbid, and assuredly not more than usually

imaginative. The result of all this was, that she bore her self with considerable dignity in the world, was cenerally believed to be older than she was, and was to be seen more often dancing or talking with the foreigners at parties than with the

Romans. Who is that, Ghisleri?" asked Lord Herbert Arden of his old friend, one evening early in the eason, as he caught sight of Laura for the first

"An English Roman girl," answered the Italian The daughter of the Princess of Gerano by her

first marriage-Miss Carlyon." Lord Herbert had not been in Rome for three or four years, and was, mereover, by no means

acquainted with all Roman society. Will you introduce me?" he asked, looking

Ghisleri led him across the room, introduced him and left the two together, he being at that time very particularly engaged in another quarter.

The contrast between the two men was very strong. Lord Herbert Arden was almost, if not quite, a cripple, the victim in his infancy of a erving-woman's carclessness. The nurse had let him tall, had concealed the accident as long as she could, and the boy had grown up misshaper and feeble. In despite of this, however, he was eminently a man at whom every one looked twice. No one who had seen him could ever torget the extreme nobility and delicacy of his pale face Each feature completed and gave dignity to the next-the broad, highly modelled forehead, the prominent brow, the hollows at the temples, the lear, steady brown eyes, the aquiline nose and emsitive nostrils, the colm, straight mouth, and the firm, clearly cut chin-all were in harmony And yet in all the crowd that thronged the great drawing-rooms there was hardly a man with whom the young Englishman would not have exchange I face and figure, if only he might stand at the height of other men, straight and square and be free ferever from the halting gait made life in the world so hard for him. He was very human, and made no great pretence of esignation, nor indeed of any other virtue.

Pietro Ghisleri was a very different persona p except, perhaps, in point of humanity seen and enjoyed much, if he had suffered much dso, and his face bore the traces of past pleasure nd of past pain, though he was not more than two-and-thirty years of age. It was a strong ace, too, and not without signs of superior in telligence and resolution. The keen blue eyes had that trick of fixing themselves in conversation which belongs to combative temperaments At other times they were sad in expression, and fren were a weary look. Chisleri's complexion might also have been called weather-beaten; for frequent and long exposure to sun and weather had permanently changed its original coloring which had been decidedly fair. To adopt the simple style of his passport, he might be described as six feet high, eyes blue, hair and must sele rown, uese large, mouth nermal, chin prominent. in fact, somewhat bony-particular sign, a scar or the left temple. Like his old friend Lord Herbert, he was one of the dozen men who always attrattention in a crowded room. But of all the vho looked at him, having known him long, very few understood his character in the least, and all would have been very much surprised if the could have guessed his thoughts, especially on that articular evening when he introduced Arden to Miss Carlyon. As for the rest, he was alone in the world, his own master, the last of a Turent family that had refused to bear a title when titles meant something and had not seen any reason for changing its mind in the course of three or four conturies. He had a small fortune sufficient for his wants, and a castle some considerably the worse for war and wear.

'I cannot dance, you see," said Arden, scriffic himself beside Laura, "and I am afraid that I am not very brilliant in conversation. Are you a very good natured person "

Laura turned her sad eyes upon her new distance and immediately felt sympathy for him, and of interest in his remark

able face. "No one ever told me," she answered. "De you think you could find out? I would like to

"What form of sin do you most affect?" aske-Arden, with a smile. "Do you more often do the bings you ought not to do, or do you leave un

done the things which you ought to do?" "Oh, I leave the good things undone, of course answered Laura. "I suppose everybody does, as a

You are decidedly good-natured, particularly

o in making that last remark. I am less afraid of you than I was when I sat down."

The young girl looked at him again. His conversation was so far not like that of the English nen she had known hitherto.

"Were you afraid of me "" she asked, smiling . Hittle

"A little, I confess." "Why, and if you were, why did you make Sig-

or Ghisleri introduce you to me?" "Because nobody likes to own to being afraid.

Besides, Ghisleri is a very old friend of mine, and can trust him not to lead me into danger."

'Have you known him long?" asked Laura I have often wondered what he is really like I mean his character, you know, and what he thinks about "

"He thinks a great deal. He is one of the most omplicated characters I ever knew, and I am not at all sure that I understand him yet, though we have known each other ten years. He is a good friend and a rather indifferent enemy, I should say. His thief apparent peculiarity is that he hates gossip. You will not find it easy to get from him a disagreeable remark about any one Yet he is not good-natured."

"Perhaps he is afraid to say what he thinks." suggested the young girl.

"I doubt that," answered Arlen, with a smile He has not a particularly angelic reputation, believe, but I never heard any one say that he

"As you pretend to be," added Laura, "Do you know you have not answered my question? Why were you afraid of me, if you really were? Lord Herbert answered one question by another, and the conversation continued pleasantly enough. It was a relief to him to find a young and beautiful girl of his own nationality in surroundings with which neither he nor she was really in sympathy. In the course of half an hour they both felt as though they had known one another long time The admiration Arden had felt for Laura at first sight had considerably increased and she on her side had half forgotten that he wa a cripple. Indeed, when he was seated, his deformities were far less noticeable than when he stood or painfully moved about from place to

with the exception of the few words spoken about Ghisleri, there was no more reference to personalities for a long time. "I am keeping you away from the dancing,"

Arden said at last, as he realized that the room was almost empty and that he had been absorbing the beautiful Miss Carlyon's attention longer than might be pleasant to her

"Not at all." answered Laura. "I do not dance

"Why not? . Do you not like dancing? asked the question in a tone of surprise. "On the contrary That I am not taken out very often-perhaps because they think me a for-eigner. It is natural enough.



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"Very unnatural, it seems to me. Besides, I believe you are exaggerating, so as not to make ne feel uncomfortable. It is of no use, you know am not at all sensitive. Shall we go into the ballroom?

"No: I would rather not just yet." "Shall I go and get Ghisleri to take you back?" inquited Arden, with a little smile.

" Why ?" "Because I might make you look ridiculous,"

answered the cripple, quietly He watched her, and saw a quick, pained look oass over her face. It was at that particular ioment that he began to love her, as he after ward remembered. She turned her eyes upon him

as she answered after a moment's hesitation. Lord Herbert, will you please never say any thing like that to me again?

"Certainly not, if it oftends you," "It does not offend me. I do not mean that."

"What then? Please tell me. I am not at all "It pains me. I do not like to fancy that any one can think such things of me, much less --

she stopped short and looked down, slowly opening and shutting her fan. · Much less? Laura hesitated for some seconds, as though

choosing her words with more than or linary care "Much less one whom it might pain to think them," she said at last. The smile that had been on Arden's face faded

away in the silence that followed, and his lips noved a little as though he felt some kind of emotion, while his large thin hands closed tightly upon his withered knee, Have I said too much 2" she asked, saddenly

breaking the long pause. "Or not quite enough, perhaps," he arswered in

Again they were both silent, and they both vondered inwardly that in less than an hour's acmaintance they should have reached something like a crisis. At last Laura rose slowly and deliberately, intending to give her companion time to get to his feet.

Will you give me your arm?" she said when he stood beside her. "I want to introduce you to

my mother. Arden beut his head and held up his right arm for her hand. He was considerably shorter than she. Then they walked away together, she erest and easy in her girlish gait, he weak-kneed and swkward, seeming to unjoint half his body at every painful step, helping himself along at her side with the stick he held in his free hand-s strangely ascorted couple, the world said, as they

"My mother's name is Gerano, Princess of Gerano," said Liura, by way of explanation, as they came within sight of her.

And is your father-I mean, is Prince Geram -living?" asked Arden. He had almost forgotten her name and her nationality in the interest he

"Yes; but he rarely goes into society. I am very fond of him," she added, scarcely knowing Mother," she said, as they came up to

the Princess, " Lerd Herbert Arden. The Princess smiled and held out her hand. At that moment Pietro Ghisleri came up. He had not men seen since he had left Laura and Arden together. By a coincidence, doubtless, the Contessa dell Arnel had disappeared at about the same time; she had probably zone home, as she was not seen again in the ballroom that evening. But the certain bendoir beyond the supper-room, where couples who did not care to dance were left in emparative peace for a long time. The world could have toll with precision the position of the small sofe on which Ghisleri and the lovely Contessa invariably spent an hour when they met in that particular house

"Will you give me a turn, Miss Carlyon " asked Ghisleri, as Arden began to talk with the Princess "Yes." Laura was really fond of a certain amount of dancing when a good partner presented

"What do you think of my friend?" inquired

lietro, as they moved away together. "I like him very much. He interests me."

"Then you ought to be grateful to me for bringing him to you."

"Do you expect gratitude in a bellmom?" Laura laughed a little, more in pleasant anticipation of the waltz than at what she said.

"A little more than in the average asylum for the aged and inform, which most people call home,

returned Ghisleri, carelessly. You have no home. How can you talk about

"For the sake of talking; shall we dance in

stead ?" A moment later they were in the thick of the crowd.

"There are too many people; please take me back," said Laura, after one turn. "Will you come and talk in the conservatory?"

asked Ghisleri as they reached the door. No; I would rather not." "You were talking a long time with Arden. I

aw you come out of the drawing-room together Why will you not sit five minutes with me? "Lord Herbert is different," said Laura, quietly "He is an Englishman, and I am English. "Oh! is that the reason?"

He led her back and left her with her mother Arden was still there.

CHAPTER II.

In spite of his own declarations to the con trary, Lord Herbert Arden was a very sensitive When he said he was not, he was perhaps trying to deceive himself, but the attempt was at least only partially successful. Few men in his circumstances can escape the daily sting that lies in comparing their unfortunate outward personality with the average symmetry of the human race. Women seem to feel deformity less than men, or perhaps one only thinks so because they bear it more bravely; it is hard to say If Darwin is right, men are far more vain of their appearance than women; and there are many who be heve that a woman's passive courage is greater than a man's. Be that as it may, the particular sufferer who made Laura Carlyon's acquaintance at the ball was in reality as sensitive a man in almost all respects as could be met with anywhere in ordinary life. When he discovered that he was seriously in love with Laura Carlyon, his existence changed suddenly, and for the worse as far as his comfort was concerned He received the situation as calmly as he could,

when a fortnight or more had passed and he had seen her a dozen times at her stepfather's house and in the world. One main fact was now quite clear to him. She was not what is called popular in society; she had not even any intimate friends As fer his own chances, he did not like to think of them. Though only the younger brother of a peer of high rank, he was entitled to expect large fortune from an uncle on his mother's side who had never made any secret of his intentions in regard to his property, and who, being over

eighty years of age, could not be expected to live much longer in the ordinary course of nature. At present his modest portion was quite sufficient for himself, but he doubted whether it would suffice for his needs if he married. That, however, was of minor importance. The great fortune was safe and he was an exceedingly good match from a financial point of view. Miss Carlyon was poor, as he knew from Ghisleri, and Ghisleri had very probably told her that Arden was rich, or would be before long. He refused to believe that Laura. of her own free will, might marry him for his money; but it was intolerable to think that her mother and stepfather might try to force her into the match from considerations of interest. He was not just to the Princess of Gerano, but he knew her very slightly as yet and had no means of forming a positive opinion.

In the mean time he had been introduced to Donna Adele Savelli, who had received him with the greatest warmth, protesting her love for the English people and everything English, and expecially for her stepmother and stepsister. He had also renewed his acquaintance with young avelli, whom he had known slightly during a for mer visit to Rome, and who now, he thought, met him rather coldly. He attributed Adele's gushing manner to a desire to bring about a marriage, and he did not attempt to account for Don Francesco's diffness; but he liked neither the one manifestation nor the other, for both wounded him in dister-

Above all other difficulties, the one which was nost natural to his delicately organized nature was of a purely disinterested kind. He feared lest Laura, who evidently felt both pity and sympathy for him, should take the two together for genuine love and sacrifice herself in a life which ould by and by become unbearable to her. He ould not but see that at every meeting she grew more interested in his conversation, until when he was present, she scarcely pat i any attention to any one else. Such a friendship, if it could have been a real friendship, might have made Arden happy long as it lasted; but on his side, at least, nothing of the kind was possible. He knew that he was hopelessly in love, and to pretend the entrary to himself was real pain. He guesced with wenderful keenness the direction Laura's heart was taking, and he was appalled by the rision of the misery which must spread over her oning life if, after she had married him, sh doubt be roused to the great truth that pity and love are not the same, though they be so near akin as to be sometimes mistaken one for the

His weak health suffered and he grow more and more restless. It would have been a satisfaction to speak out a hundredth part of what he felt to Ghisleri. But he was little given to making conthieners, and Ghisleri was or seemed to be the last man to invite them. They met constantly, however, and talked upon all sorts of topics.

One day Ghisler, came to breakfast with Arden in his rooms at the botel, looking more weatherbeaten than usual, for he was losing the tan from his last expedition in the south, and there were trop black shadows under his eyes. as in an abominably bad humor with everything and with everyboly except his friend. Arden knew that be never gambled, and he also knew the man well enough to guess at the true cause of the disturbance. There was something serious the

They sat down to breakfast and began to talk they are aware that there is something wrong Ghisleri spoke English perfectly, with an almost in perceptible accent, as many Italians ilo nowa-

"Come along with me, Arden," he said at last, as though lesing patience with everything all at once. "Let us go to Paris or Timbuctoo. This place is not fit to live in. "What is the matter with it?" asked Arden.

in a tone of amusement. The matter with jt? It is dull, to begin with

Secondly, it is a perfect witches' caldron of scandal. Thirdly, we are all as bad as we can be There are three points at least."

" My dear fellow, I do not see them in the same light. Take some more hock."

"Oh, you-you are amusing yourself! Thank you-I will-half a glass Of course you like Pome-you always did-you foreigners always will. You amuse yourselves-that is it."

"I see you dancing every night as though you liked it." observed Arden. " No floubt." Chisleri suddenly grew thoughtful and a distant

look came into his eyes, while the shadows seemed to deepen under them till they were almost black He had eaten hardly anything, and now, regardless of the fact that the meal was not half over, he lit a eigareste and leaned back in his chair as though he had finished.

"You are not looking well, Arden," he said at "You must take care of yourself. Take my advice. We will go somewhere together for couple of months."

"There is nothing I should like better, but not inst at present. I will stay in Rome until the weather is a little warmer."

Arden was not in the least conscious that his

expression changed as he thought of the reason which kept him in the city and which might keep him long. But Ghisleri, who had been watching for that particular hesitation of manner and fer that almost imperceptible darkening of the eyes, knew exactly what both meant.

"Oh, very well," he answered indifferently "We can go later People aiways invent absurd stories if one goes away in the middle of the sea-

son without any apparent object." The remark was a little less than general, and Arden was at once confirmed in his suspicion that semething unpleasant had happened in Ghisleri's life, most probably in connection with the Contessa dell' Armi. His friend was in such a savage humor that he might almost become communicative Arden was a very keen-sighted man, and not without tact, and he thought the opportunity a good one for approaching a subject which had fong been in his mind But he had been in earnest when e had told Laura that he knew Ghisleri's character to be what he called complicated, and he was aware that Pietro's intelligence was even more penetrating than his own He was therefore very cautious. You say that Rome is such a great place for

gossip," he began, in answer to Ghisleri's last observation. "I suppose you know it by experience, but I cannot say that we strangers hear much of it."

"Perhaps not," admitted Ghisleri, rather al "No, we do not hear much scandal. For in

stance, I go rather often to the Geranos'. I do not remember to have heard there a single spiteful story, except, perhaps-" Arden stopped cautiously said Pietro, "the exceptions are rare in that house. But then, the Prince is generally away, and both the Princess and her daugh ter are English, and especially nice people

Arden helped himself to something that ch to be near him, and glanced at his co rather impenetrable face. He knew that at the present moment the latter was perfectly sincers in what he said, but he knew also that Ghisler spoke of most people in very much the same tone It was something which Arden could never quite

"Do you think." he began presently, "that the fact of their being English has anything to do with Miss Carlyon's unpopularity here?"

"My dear fellow, how should I know?" asked Ghisleri, with something almost like a laugh. "You do know, of course. I wish you would tell me. As an Englishman the mother interests

"From the point of view of our internation relations, I see, collecting information for an article in the Nineteenth Century, or else your brother is going to speak on the subject in the Lords. What do you think about the matter yourself? If I can put you right, I will."

"What an extraordinary man you are!" claimed Arden. "You always insist upon answer. ing one question by another "

"It gives one time to think," retorted Chistert These cigarettes are distinctly bad; give me one of yours, please. I never can understand why the government monopoly here should exist, and if a does why they should not give us Russian-"My dear Ghisleri," said Arden, interrapting

him, " we were talking about the Princess Gerane Oh, yes, and Miss Carlyon, ton Were we? I remember. Do you like them?" "Very much; and I think every one should. That is the reason why I am surprised that Man

Carlyon should not receive much more atten than she does. I fancy it is because she is Eng lish. Do you think I am right?" "No," said Ghisleri, slowly, at last answering the direct question, "I do not think you are."

Then what in the world is the reason? The fact is clear enough. She knows it herself," "Probably some absurd bit of gossip. Whe cares? I am sorry for her, though." " How can there be any scandal about a young

girl of her age?" asked Arden, incredulously. "In this place you can start a story about a baby a year old," answered Ghisleri, remembered, repeated, and properly adorned, and will ultimately rain the innocent woman whea she is grown up. Nobody seems to care for chronology here -anachronism is so much more con-

"Why are you so absurdly reticent with me, Ghisleri?" asked Arden, with some impatience. You talk as though we had not known each other ten years.

"On the contrary," answered Pietro, "if we were acquaintances of yesterday, I would not talk at all. That is just the difference. As it is, and because we are rather good friends. I tell you what I believe to be the truth. I believe-well, I will allow that I know, that there is a story about Miss Carlyon, which is commonly credited, and which is a downright lie. I will not tell you what it is. It does not, strictly speaking, affect her reputation, but it has made her unpopularsince you have used that word. Ask any of the gossips, if you care enough-I am not going to

repeat other people's lies." Arden was silent, and his long white fingers played uneasily upon the edge of the table. It and been a hard matter to extract the information, but such as it was he knew that it was absolutely reliable. When Ghisleri spoke at all about such things, he spoke the truth, and when he said that he would positively say no more, his decision was always final. Arden had discovered that in the early days of their acquaintance. Perhaps Pietro went to absurd lengths in this direction, and there were people who called it affectation and made him out to be even a worse man than he was, but his friend knew that it was genuine in its way. He was all the more disturbed by what he had heard, and it was a long time before he

spoke again. Ghisleri smoked in silence and drank three cups of coffee while Arden was drinking one. He looked at that time like a man who was living upon his nerves, so to say, instead of upon proper nourish-

An hour later the two men went out together, Arden taking Pietro with him in his carriage. The air was bright and keen and the afternoon sunight was already turning yellow with the gold of the coming evening. The carriage was momentarily blocked at the corner of the Pincio near the entrance, by one that was turning out of the enclosure opposite the band stand. It chanced to be the Princess of Gerano's landau, and she and her daughter were seated in it, closely wrapped in their furs. It was Arden's victoria that had to call up to let the Prince coincidence the Savelli couple were in the

which hers would have to follow in the descending line after crossing the road.
Francesco Savelli bowed, smiled, and waved his Francesco Savelli bowed, smiled, and waved his hat, evidently to Laura rather than to her mother. With a rather forced smile Alele slowly bent her head. Arden bowed at the same moment, and looked from one carriage to the other. Ghisier fellowed his example, and there was the very faintest expression of amusement on his face which Arden of course could not see. A number of men on foot lined the side of the road close to the carriage.

on toot lines the sale of the refirst loves;

"Be diversely all selections of them, and it was impossible to guess which had spoken. Chisleri, being on the right stde, as Abden's guest, could not have heard the words. Having just noticed the rather striking contrast tween Francesco Sevelli's demonstrative greeing and his wife's almost indifferent nod, it naturally struck the Englishman that the remark he had overheard might refer to the person he was himself watching at that very moment. Doma Adele Savelli's expression might very well be taken for one of jealously, but her husband's behavior was assuredly too marked for anything more than friendship. Arden coupied the words with the facts and concluded that he had discovered the story of which Ghisleri had spoken. Francesco Savelli was said to be in love with Laura Carlyon. That was evidently the gossty: but he had eet was wholly indifferent. On the whole, though the tale reflected little credit on Savelli, it was nest at all clear why it should make Laura unpopular, unless people said that she encouraged the man, which they probably did, thought Lord Harbort Arden, who was a man of the word.

The more he constiered the matter the mere convinced he became that he was right, and the conviction was on the whole a relief. He had been uneasy for some time, and Ghisler's guarded words had not satisfied him; chance, however, had done what Ghisler' would not do, and the mystery was solved. The Princess of Gerane was at home that evening, and Arden of course went to the palace carly, and was the last to leave.

Three times between half-past en and half-past en so many in Rome during the season.

The times between half-past en and half-past ers on many in Rome during the season. The first interruption of Arden's talk appeared in the shape of Don Francesco Savelli, who asked Laura for a strange thrill to his heart. He struggled the sank back again and remained some time, a strange thrill to his heart. He struggled the sank back again and remained some time as such pasted